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The Operational Leadership of General Douglas MacArthur in OPERATION CHROMITE

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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15. Abstract: Successful operational leaders demonstrate four key traits in applying the operational arts: vision, boldness, decisiveness, and "jointness." These traits are essential for the twenty-first century joint warfighter. General MacArthur demonstrated these traits in formulating the plans for OPERATION CHROMITE, the amphibious assault at Inchon in Korea in 1950. By analyzing how each of these traits was demonstrated in this operation, the joint warfighter can use a practical example to reinforce this theory.			
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In the joint environment of the twenty-first century, one element that transcends the individual service distinctions is the element of operational leadership. With leadership understood as being "that quality which can make other men do what they do not want to do and like it,"¹ operational leadership is that skill that uses operational art to transform the national or strategic objectives into military objectives.² It is the ability of a military commander to use the resources at his disposal to achieve the approved national or strategic objectives. Pertaining to all levels in the military organization that apply operational art: Joint Task Forces, Navy Battle Groups, or Army Corps, operational leadership is not confined solely to the realm of the Flag or General Officer; however, it is at that level in the military chain of command where it is most often displayed.³ As with any skill, there are those individuals who have a natural ability to do well at a given task; there are others who would perform that same task poorly. Although one can learn a great deal from studying both officers characterized as gifted operational leaders and officers that have achieved less than spectacular results, for the purpose of this paper, the former will be studied.

In applying the operational arts, gifted operational leaders appear to hold four traits in common with each other: vision, boldness, decisiveness, and "jointness." Each of these has contributed directly

¹ Harry S. Truman, quoted in Karel Montor, ed., Naval Leadership: Voices of Experience, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987), 1.

² Milan N. Vego, Operational Warfare, (NWC Publication 1004) 2000, p. 561.

³ Vego, Operational Warfare, p. 561.

to the leader's success in his military operations. Whether it was developing a plan to storm the beaches in Normandy in World War II, expel the Iraqis from Kuwait during Desert Storm, or land troops at Inchon during the Korean War, the operational arts were used to their utmost degree by the military commanders. Through their experiences in wartime environments, they had the ability to finely hone their leadership skills, carefully safeguarding those tactics that worked and discarding those that fell short of their objectives. Experience was the essential factor used by the operational leaders to finely hone those skills needed to lead their subordinates to victory. These leaders ultimately achieved the desired national or strategic objectives using their military prowess.

The primary skill of a successful operational leader is vision. Vision can be defined as the "formulation of an end-state that acts as the beacon to guide ... through the uncertainty of change."⁴ It is the ability of the operational leader to convey his thoughts and ideas on how his military subordinates can achieve the desired objective while convincing them that the objective is attainable. They look realistically at what the future can hold and consider things they know (from experience) and things they can anticipate. The vision provides the sense of purpose, direction, and motivation.⁵ The leader subsequently achieves "buy in" by his subordinates who eventually transform the leader's vision in to their own.

Another trait found in common among great operational leaders is boldness. Boldness can be defined as the ability to dare to go beyond

⁴ Christopher D. Kolenda, ed., Leadership: The Warrior's Art, (Carlisle: Army War College Foundation Press, 2001), 347.

⁵ Army Leadership, Be, Know, Do, (FM 22-100) August, 1999, 7-8.

what is expected while taking chances. However important this trait may seem to be, it is found less often in the senior ranks.⁶ In peacetime, this may be so because being a risk-taker can be a career ender if the risk is too great or if it results in an undesirable outcome. In war time, it may be less prevalent because the more senior the officer becomes, the more likely it is for the tempering influences of rationality, logic and insight to overcome the desire to "be bold." This makes boldness a virtual rarity the more senior the leader becomes and makes it even more admirable when found among the senior ranks.⁷ "We consider this quality (boldness) the first prerequisite of the great military leader." ⁸

The third key trait is decisiveness. The ability to make a decision, stick with it and continue in the face of adversity is a hallmark of a successful operational leader. Constantly bombarded by differing accounts from the battlefield, exhaustion, and a sense of defeat among the troops when a battle is not progressing as hoped, the operational leader must be able to draw upon an inner strength to see himself through the difficult situations while not second guessing himself. It is essential that he persevere. "Perseverance is the chosen course in the essential counterweight, provided that no compelling reasons intervene to the contrary." ⁹

Holding vision, boldness, and decisiveness together is the ability to apply the philosophy of "jointness." This is the ability to bring

⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, On War, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 191.

⁷ Ibid., 192.

⁸ Ibid., 192.

⁹ Ibid., 193.

together the member strengths of each of the armed services in serving a common purpose to achieve the desired military objective. Jointness brings the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps strengths (personnel, equipment, doctrine) together to serve a common purpose while leaving behind their individual organizational biases and prejudices.

This paper will show how General Douglas MacArthur demonstrated his keen operational leadership in formulating the plans for OPERATION CHROMITE, the amphibious landing at Inchon during the Korean War. By conveying his vision, boldness, perseverance, and jointness, the operation was hailed as a brilliant stroke of operational genius. The military leadership of the twenty-first century can take these lessons and apply them to their joint environment. The world geography will remain the same; only the technology, politics, and leadership will change.

"He was a thundering paradox of a man, noble and ignoble, inspiring and outrageous, arrogant and shy, the best of men and the worst of men, the most protean, most ridiculous, and most sublime."¹⁰ A veteran of World Wars I and II and having worn his stars since 1918, General MacArthur was accustomed to being followed and obeyed, and, most of all, he was accustomed to being "right." With only a brief period of retirement (1937-1941), his entire life was dedicated to the U.S. Army with the majority of his flag duty being spent in East Asia. Beginning during his days as head of the American military mission to the fledgling Philippine commonwealth, he was always trusted to take the lead of military affairs.

¹⁰ William Manchester, American Caesar (Boston: Little, Brown and Company 1978), 3.

He spent his entire assignment during World War II in the Pacific. It began in the Philippines where he commanded the defense of the Philippines until ordered to evacuate by President Roosevelt. This was followed by his assumption of command of Allied Forces in the Southwest Pacific through his campaigns in New Guinea and the liberation of the Philippines. After being a part of the Japanese surrender ceremony aboard the USS MISSOURI in September 1945, he was named the commander of Allied Powers in Japan and directed the Allied occupation of Japan. As directed by President Truman, MacArthur's authority in Japan was supreme. He had control of nearly one hundred million people from Japan to the Marianas where he had to be "an economist, a political scientist, an engineer, a manufacturing executive, a teacher, even a theologian of sorts."¹¹

He did not see himself as being responsible for Korea and had written it off before World War II ended.¹² However, this was to change in 1950 when, at the beginning of the Korean War, he was appointed as the commander of United Nations forces in South Korea, while retaining his command of Allied forces in Japan. He was facing a different enemy in a different world situation. A Flag Officer for the past 32 years, already past seventy and having spent the last fourteen years in the Far East, MacArthur's experience, sense of duty, and truly expert operational leadership would be pivotal in designing an operation to counter the North Korean advance.

Understanding that the Republic of Korea forces could not hold their own in battle with the North Koreans, MacArthur insisted upon and eventually received additional United States ground forces to join the

¹¹ Ibid., 470.

¹² Robert Smith, MacArthur in Korea: The Naked Emperor. (New York: Simon and Schuster 1982), 19.

battle. Following a three month sea, air, and ground battle, MacArthur proposed a bold initiative to land at Inchon although he stated it only had a 5,000:1 chance of success.¹³ It is the application of operational leadership used during the formulation of the OPERATION CHROMITE preparations that this paper will address.

A seasoned veteran of numerous amphibious operations in the littorals of the Pacific in World War II, MacArthur began to formulate a bold counterstroke to the North Korean advance. Although supplemented by South Korean defenders, his primary concern was the limited number of U.S. troops (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines) available to him for his counteroffensive. Since he was stationed in Japan at the onset of the war, he decided that the only way to get the true perspective of the battle was to go to Korea to see for himself. With the city of Seoul under attack, MacArthur faced a forlorn hope of victory. "Once again I was being thrown into the breach against almost insuperable odds. Once again it was Bataan - and Corregidor - and New Guinea."¹⁴ It was his knowledge of facing a hopeless situation, and the vast experience he had in the Pacific that prompted him to formulate the plan for the Inchon landing. If he were given U.S. ground troops, he felt that he could surround and sever the North Korean's long, tenuous supply lines. By cutting these critical lines, he believed that victory was possible despite the overwhelming three to one North Korean advantage. It was during this realization that MacArthur conceived of the Inchon plan setting the stage for the brilliant amphibious operation.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid., 71.

¹⁴ Douglas MacArthur, Reminiscences, (McGraw-Hill: New York, 1964), 332.

¹⁵ Ibid., 334.

At the end of World War II, the United States armed forces were comprised of almost 12 million men and women who manned 95 infantry, armor, airborne and Marine divisions; 92,000 aircraft; 1,307 warships; and 82,000 landing craft.¹⁶ At the outbreak of the Korean War, there were only 238 naval combatants, including 6 fleet carriers; 6 battalions and 12 aircraft squadrons for the Marines; 14 reduced-strength Army divisions and 48 air groups.¹⁷ This dramatic reduction in forces, compounded by the "Europe first" priority, had a direct impact on available forces to be used in the Korean theater.

Lack of available manpower was only one of the challenges to be overcome. However, history did provide hope that the landing site could be "tamed." Despite the inhospitable conditions, there were two other occasions in history, when the Korean port of Inchon (formerly called Chemulpo) was the site of an enemy attack: the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905).¹⁸ On both occasions, the Japanese were the attackers. It is the latter that is the more interesting of the two because of its implications of a possible genesis of OPERATION CHROMITE in MacArthur's subconscious. On February 7, 1904, a Japanese fleet consisting of the cruisers and destroyers: ASAMA, NANIWA, TAKACHIHO, CHIYODA, and eight torpedo boats destroyed the three ship Russian detachment at Inchon.¹⁹ It is possible that MacArthur, a student of history and an observer accompanying his father in Japan after the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese war, may have stored away this information to be used at a later time.

¹⁶ Curtis A. Utz, Assault from the Sea. The Amphibious Landing at Inchon. 6.

¹⁷ Ibid., 7.

¹⁸ Warner, The Tide at Sunrise, 81.

With military manpower being in such short supply, it became MacArthur's primary focus. He needed to convince the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) that the Marines were needed in Korea. "There can be no demand for its potential use (the Marine Division) elsewhere that can equal the urgency of the immediate battle mission contemplated for it."

²⁰ The Joint Chiefs of Staff immediately responded with a query for more information on the division's planned use and provided hope of arrival of forces by winter.

Although he did not mention the Inchon operation directly, MacArthur responded to the JCS the next day (July 23, 1950) that his plan called for a mid-September amphibious landing of two division corps in the rear of the enemy lines to destroy and envelop the enemy forces. These forces would be joined by the Eighth Army forces in the South. ²¹ The JCS relented and the Marines were made available to MacArthur mid-August.

The Inchon assault, later called OPERATION CHROMITE, called for an amphibious landing by Marines at Inchon, almost one hundred twenty miles behind enemy lines and twenty-five miles from Seoul. By landing at and capturing Inchon, the forces could then seize the nearby air base at Kimpo which would enable the United Nations (UN) forces to launch an attack to recapture Seoul. The UN forces would also move westward across the peninsula from their position in Pusan. This would appear as a double-envelopment (pincer movement) to crush the North Koreans from the northwest at Inchon and from the southeast at Pusan. MacArthur's

¹⁹ McCully, The McCully Report. The Russo-Japanese War 1904-05, 66.

²⁰ MacArthur quoted in Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., Victory at High Tide: The Inchon-Seoul Campaign. (J. B. Lippincott Company: New York, 1968), 23.

²¹ Heinl, 24.

plan had four purposes: (1) strike at the rear of the North Korean forces, (2) cut their supply lines to the south, (3) gain the political advantage by liberating Seoul, and (4) threaten the North Korean capital of Pyongyang.²² MacArthur brought all of his experience and expertise to bear on this undertaking.

"We shall land at Inchon and I shall crush them."²³ MacArthur believed in his own vision for OPERATION CHROMITE, and he knew he needed support to make it work. He had to convince the JCS and his staffers that his plan was feasible, but he would be facing an uphill battle with the JCS from the beginning. JCS Chairman General Omar Bradley testified in 1949 before the Armed Services committee: "I predict that large-scale amphibious operations...will never occur again."²⁴ This philosophy, combined with the philosophy of the Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson, who was determined to cut the "fat out of the Armed Forces" specifically the Navy and the Marine Corps, did not bode well for MacArthur. Johnson stated that "There's no reason for having a Navy and Marine Corps...We'll never have any more amphibious operations. That does away with the Marine Corps. And the Air Force can do anything the Navy can nowadays, so that does away with the Navy."²⁵

Despite the success of amphibious operations during World War II, amphibious operations during the late 1940s were not highly thought of by Naval officers themselves. There was a high percentage of officers assigned to amphibious billets who were passed over for promotion. At the time, no captain who headed the amphibious warfare section of the

²² Bernard K. Duffy and Ronald H. Carpenter, Douglas MacArthur: Warrior as Wordsmith, (Greenwood Press: Westport, 1997), 83.

²³ Duffy, 90.

²⁴ Duffy, 83.

²⁵ Secretary of Defense, Louis A. Johnson, quoted in Heinl, 6.

office of the Chief of Naval Operations was ever promoted to admiral.²⁶

The only other navy branch more detested than amphibious operations was mine warfare.

The Marine Corps was fighting for its existence and was significantly depleted even before OPERATION CHROMITE was conceived. In 1950, the Fleet Marine Force had been cut from its 1948 numbers of 35,086 to 23,952 and the Navy's 362 amphibious ships in commission in 1947 (from a high in World War II of 610) had been reduced to a total of 91.²⁷ General MacArthur needed to convince the JCS that the amphibious operation was essential to achieve victory.

MacArthur made his plea to JCS via the Army Chief of Staff. During a visit to Tokyo by the Army Chief of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins, he and MacArthur discussed Marine Corps requirements in OPERATION CHROMITE. Collins was skeptical. His concern was how the Russians would react. Would they use the conflict in Korea to march on the Rhine?²⁸ However, by the end of the visit, General Collins did change his mind and promised MacArthur Marine support. JCS would follow Collins recommendations. MacArthur managed to convince the JCS that OPERATION CHROMITE was feasible. He prevailed; his vision was accepted by his seniors.

Understanding that he needed not only JCS support but subordinate support, MacArthur had to find a way to convey his vision of success to his men - those who would be leading the task groups and landing teams.

He needed their "buy in" to his vision. MacArthur understood that his

²⁶ Heintz, 7.

²⁷ Duffy, 84.

²⁸ Heintz, 20.

plan was a distinctly Navy operation. Without the ships, Marine amphibious troops, and the Navy-Marine expertise, there would not be any landing at Inchon.²⁹ It would forever remain a plan instead of an actual event. Thus, he needed to convince Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations that OPERATION CHROMITE was worth the gamble.

He understood that the Navy-Marine planners looked at his plan with skepticism. "Those who know, or thought they knew, this complex, incisive, ambitious admiral, had little doubt that he was deeply concerned over the risks MacArthur seemed so bold to confront."³⁰

In late August, MacArthur met with the key planners for the amphibious landing including the CNO, the Army Chief of Staff, all of MacArthur's staff, and the admirals who would be leading the task groups. The briefers presented the audience with the details of the operation: intelligence, tides, currents, channels, landing craft, air strikes. All points showed that the plan was not feasible. At the conclusion of the brief, Vice Admiral James H. Doyle, a veteran amphibious commander and the future commander of the attack force, spoke up and said to MacArthur: "If I were asked (about this landing)...the best I can say is that Inchon is not impossible."³¹ General Collins countered that the assault on Inchon was too far in the rear of the battle area and would not have the desired immediate affect on the enemy. He did not believe that even if the landing were successful, that the landing forces could continue south through Seoul to connect with the UN forces moving northwest from Pusan.³² MacArthur countered

²⁹ Ibid., 39

³⁰ Ibid., 39.

³¹ Ibid., 40.

³² MacArthur, 349.

their arguments with a stirring soliloquy noting that he understood their concerns, worries, and frustrations, but he had confidence that the plan would work and that it would change the course of the war.

"My confidence in the Navy is complete, and in fact I seem to have more confidence in the Navy than the Navy has in itself. The Navy's rich experience in staging the numerous amphibious landings under my command in the Pacific during the late war, frequently made under somewhat similar difficulties, leaves me with little doubt on that score...The prestige of the Western world hangs in the balance...Make the wrong decision here - the fatal decision of inertia - and we will be done. I can almost hear the ticking of the second hand of destiny. We must act now or we will die."³³

MacArthur's ability to convey his vision was complete. He had their support.

Vision alone was not the sole reason for the success of the amphibious landing. MacArthur's boldness and decisiveness in the face of apparently insurmountable odds also contributed to the positive outcome of the operation. The sheer audacity of the plan lends credence to the fact that it was a stroke of pure brilliance and absolute boldness - "a bold plan worthy of a master strategist."³⁴ He never wavered from his objective: landing troops at Inchon to crush the enemy's lines of supply and communication.

Landing at Inchon was believed to be an impossibility. Two Naval officers on Admiral Doyle's staff summarized the conditions at Inchon: (1) "We drew up a list of every natural and geographic handicap -- and Inchon had 'em all;" and (2) "Make up a list of amphibious "don'ts," and you have an exact description of the Inchon operation."³⁵ Overcoming the natural hesitancy and reluctance to tackle a mission under these

³³ Ibid., 350.

³⁴ Harry S. Truman as quoted in Heinl, 14.

³⁵ Heinl, 24.

conditions required decisiveness, finesse, stamina, and a clear sense of direction and support from the operational leader: MacArthur.

According to the amphibious doctrine of the time, there were seven criteria for a safe landing area:

1. Ability of naval forces to support assault and follow-up operations
2. Shelter from unfavorable sea and weather
3. Compatibility of the beaches and their approaches with the size, draft, and maneuverability of the landing craft
4. Water depth and bottom configuration
5. The extent of minable water
6. Conditions which may affect the enemy's ability to counter the mine clearing efforts of the attacking force
7. Offloading shipping facilities and their improvement.³⁶

OPERATION CHROMITE would not be presenting a safe landing area for friendly forces. There would need to be "work arounds" if the plan were to succeed.

If the above list did not deter the planners, the fact that there were more obstacles that needed to be overcome caused much consternation on the part of the staff. The tidal range at Inchon at 32 feet is the second greatest in the world (only behind the 45-50 foot range of the Bay of Fundy tides.)³⁷ The tides rush in to the bay causing turbulent eddies and swift channel flow (3-8 knots) making safe navigation of these waterways difficult. Once the tide ebbed, mud flats and saltpans combined with swampy bottom land remained. Additionally, the eminently minable approach to the channel left minimal room for maneuver or turning of vessels.³⁸

The presence of landing beaches is normally a prerequisite for any amphibious landing. Inchon had none. All that was available were rocks

³⁶ Ibid., 25.

³⁷ Heinl, 25.

³⁸ Heinl, 25; Duffy, 84.

with some sand and mud requiring the landing force to scale makeshift wooden ladders to breach the twelve to fourteen foot high seawalls. As if that were not enough, the time of the high tide (1920 local) only allowed the landing troops twenty-seven minutes of daylight to secure the city "the size of Omaha" before reinforcements could arrive at the next high tide.³⁹

Boldness and decisiveness on the part of an operational commander are essential. It took strength of character, force of personality, and absolute confidence on MacArthur's part to propose a plan of this audacity. However, due to the audacity and apparent "impossibility" of the task, the element of surprise, combined with MacArthur's planned deception for a feint landing at Kunsan, became the overwhelming factor leading to the plan's eventual success. The North Korean forces could not have anticipated such a bold stroke.

Despite MacArthur's conviction, and his thinking that he had conveyed his vision adequately, the JCS still had their doubts on OPERATION CHROMITE's feasibility. On September 5, (D-10), they requested a detailed explanation of the landing. MacArthur boldly and decisively replied that his plans did not change. "There is no question in my mind as to the feasibility of the operation, and I regard its chance of success as excellent. I go further and believe that it represents the only hope of wresting the initiative from the enemy and thereby presenting the opportunity for a decisive blow...I and all of my commanders and staff officers, without exception, are enthusiastic for and confident of the success of the enveloping movement." ⁴⁰

³⁹ Duffy, 85.

⁴⁰ Heintz, 64.

MacArthur's relative seniority and amphibious experience empowered him to propose his plan (he was an officer for 12 years before the JCS Chairman, General Bradley, was commissioned). He quickly offered arguments for landing at Inchon instead of the safer, but less bold alternative of landing at Kunsan, a more "hydrographically ideal site farther south and closer to Walker at Pusan."⁴¹ Kunsan would not bring the decisive victory MacArthur anticipated and would only delay their victory. JCS concurred and acquiesced. MacArthur's bold plan and vision were accepted by the JCS.

MacArthur knew that OPERATION CHROMITE would be a joint endeavor.⁴²

From his extensive experience in the south Pacific campaigns during World War II, he understood that the Navy-Marine Corps team, when combined with the Army, posed a formidable force any enemy would fear. Once the international, coalition element was added, the plan would be even stronger. OPERATION CHROMITE was no exception. The only way the operation would succeed would be to have all the forces work together to achieve the military objective for this landing and liberation of Seoul.

Under MacArthur's guidance, Joint Task Force 7 was formed and led by the Commander Seventh Fleet, Vice Admiral Struble. The invasion force was responsible for transporting and supporting a Marine division, an infantry division, a Marine air wing, and the requisite supporting structure for this operation: 71,339 officers and men of the Marine Corps, Navy, Army, and Korean Marines.⁴³ Complementing this force was a

⁴¹ Duffy, 87.

⁴² According to Robert Heintz, the Air Force was not a direct player in OPERATION CHROMITE but played a vital role in supporting the Eighth Army in Pusan. This permitted the Navy and Marine air squadrons who were performing this duty to support the amphibious assault. Superior Navy and Marine combat experience and formalized doctrine were two reasons that the Navy and Marines were used to provide the air cover for the assault. Additionally, Admiral Struble may have been predisposed to being wary of Air Force support due to his bad experience during the Normandy landings and the lack of promised Air Force cover at Omaha Beach.

⁴³ Heintz, 52.

fleet comprised of 230 U.S. Navy, Royal Navy, Royal Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, ROK, French, and Japanese ships.⁴⁴

Despite internal conflicts and disagreements on the plan, the essential elements were agreed upon on September 8 (D-7). The controversial landing occurring over two tides was worked out; the complicated plan for bringing the Marines ashore was finalized; and the plan for supporting fires including napalm strikes on Wolmi Do, air strikes, rocket barrages, and ship gun support was resolved.⁴⁵ MacArthur's decision in mid-August finalized the joint and combined staff organization:

JOINT TASK FORCE SEVEN: VADM Arthur D. Struble
TASK FORCE 90: Attack force. RADM Doyle, USN
TASK FORCE 91: Blockade and Covering Force: RADM Andrewes, RN
TASK FORCE 92: X Corps, MG Almond, USA
TASK FORCE 99: Patrol and Reconnaissance Force, RADM Henderson, USN
TASK FORCE 77: Fast Carrier Force, RADM Ewen, USN
TASK FORCE 79: Service Squadron, CAPT Austin, USN ⁴⁶

These decisions, coupled by his absolute confidence in the eventual success of the plan, were proven to be correct. "...The victory was not won by any one nation or any one branch of the military service. The Inchon-Seoul operation was conducted jointly by the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps."⁴⁷

The eventual success of OPERATION CHROMITE set the stage for a future role for amphibious warfare. The U.S. Marine Corps and naval aviation were no longer up for dismantling. The United States would need to be prepared to engage the Communist enemy whenever and wherever

⁴⁴ Ibid., 52.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 60.

⁴⁶ Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona, U.S. Marine Operations in Korea. 1950-1953. Volume II. The Inchon-Seoul Operation (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office 1955) 313.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 297.

he appeared. Having a ready fleet and mobile Marine Corps would pose as a strong deterrent to the advance of Communism.

No discussion of MacArthur's brilliant operational leadership in OPERATION CHROMITE would be complete without acknowledging the subsequent conduct of his advance up the Korean peninsula. Despite the overwhelming success of the Inchon landing and liberation of Seoul, MacArthur's further actions in the Korean theater appear as contradictions to his superb operational leadership during OPERATION CHROMITE. With "victory fever" sweeping the nation after the success at Inchon, the national strategic objective changed from status quo ante bellum to unifying Korea. MacArthur's two-pronged approach up the peninsula (without sufficient logistical support) brought his forces into contact with evidence of Chinese intervention that was erroneously and blatantly ignored by the operational leader. MacArthur's hubris and over-optimism caused him to under-estimate the Chinese reaction to his force. On 24 November, MacArthur launched a new offensive. On 25 November, almost 400,000 Chinese troops began to push his forces toward a retreat. On 28 November, MacArthur faced an entirely different war – with the possibility of defeat. To extricate himself from this catastrophe, he advocated the use of reinforcements, use of Kuomintang troops, air assaults on Manchuria, a naval blockade, and the possible use of atomic weapons.⁴⁸ This was not acceptable to Washington, which was reluctant to further escalate the war by inviting Russian intervention and with it, setting the stage for the opening offensives of World War III. His intense public disagreement with the administration's handling of the Korean War and the national strategic objectives caused his downfall. He was eventually recalled by President Truman in April 1951 and retired from military service.

By his keen operational leadership and by articulating a clear vision, showing unwavering boldness, clear decisiveness, and a true appreciation for jointness, MacArthur was directly responsible for the success of OPERATION CHROMITE. These traits are as applicable today as they were in 1950. They are critical attributes for the twenty-first century joint operational leader. In the today's technologically oriented world, the future battles will still bring together disparate groups with their own experiences and personal biases and prejudices. The operational leader will need to ensure that he is able to convey his

vision to his subordinates, peers, and seniors while acknowledging that there may be disagreement with his plan. The exceptional operational leader is able to take those differences decisively – and use them to unify his group – as MacArthur did.

However, being decisive, bold and visionary, are still not enough for the operational leader of the twenty-first century. He must be able to work in a joint environment and go beyond the color of the uniform – he must also think “internationally.” It is unlikely that the United States would engage an enemy in the twenty-first century without the support of a fellow coalition member. The twenty-first century joint warrior must be able to convey his vision across different cultural boundaries while ensuring all opposing viewpoints are acknowledged. He must be truly “internationally joint.” The operational leader who fails to apply the lessons from history in today’s joint environment will have little chance of success in the twenty-first century.

⁴⁸ Smith, 69.

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